

ISSUE

18.36

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

September 4,
2016

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



“Devoted Things”

by Kyle Pope

The Law of Moses taught an important principle which underlies a number of significant events in the Old Testament and sets the stage for doctrines that are a part of the New Covenant. Under the Law of Moses either God or man could set aside something to be considered “a devoted thing.” Leviticus 27:28-29 taught: “...no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD” (Lev. 27:28, NKJV). These things were wholly given over to the Lord. No redemption price could buy back the thing or animal. They were either completely destroyed or used by the Lord for His own purposes. In some cases people in rebellion to God also became “devoted things” whom God chose to punish with destruction. The Law taught: “No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 27:29). In our English Bibles we might not initially recognize the relationship between *devoted things* and those said to be “under the ban” but the same wording is used in both passages. The Hebrew verb *charam* translated “devote” or “doomed

to destruction” and its noun *cherem* translated “devoted thing” or “person under the ban” in these verses show that a person under God’s judgment or a thing dedicated as an offering to Him are equally considered *devoted things*.

We may see this principle throughout the history of Israel. The Law of Moses, for example, demanded that those who sacrificed to another god were **“to be utterly destroyed (*charam*)”** (Exod. 22:20). They should have dedicated themselves to God, but in their failure to do so they become dedi-

cated to Him for judgment. The Law taught that an Israelite city which drew other Israelites away to worship idols was to be *utterly destroyed* and all of its goods were to be burned (Deut. 13:12-18). Again, their failure to recognize that they properly belonged to God didn’t change their accountability to Him. When the Lord delivered Canaan into the hands of the Israelites, the inhabitants of the land were considered *devoted* to the Lord. The Canaanites had given themselves to the most extreme forms of wickedness and idolatry. Because of their failure to devote themselves to God, Israel was to **“conquer them and utterly destroy (*charam*) them”** (Deut. 7:2). Jericho was to be **“doomed...to destruction (*cherem*)”** (Joshua 6:17). This was an act of divine judgment. The people and their property belonged to God and He had all right to do with them as He chose. The Israelites were not to presume that Jericho and its property became theirs in the conquest. They were warned, **“...by all means abstain from the accursed things (*cherem*), lest you become accursed (*charam*) when you take of the accursed things (*cherem*), and make the camp of Israel a curse (*cherem*), and trouble it.”** (Josh. 6:18). This was Achan’s sin. He took of the spoil of Jericho and became *accursed* himself. Only when what belonged to God in the

first place was returned did the Israelites cease to be *accursed* themselves. Willing dedication of oneself and property to God determines whether being a “devoted thing” is a blessing or a mark impending punishment.

This is true whether one is an alien to the covenant of God or in a covenant relationship with Him. For example, after Israel inhabited Canaan when Jabesh Gilead refused to assist their brethren in the battle against the Benjaminites, God



commanded, “...**this is the thing that you shall do: you shall utterly destroy (*charam*) every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately**” (Judg. 21:11). The fact that they were Israelites did not spare them. They had failed to follow God and thus became objects devoted to His judgment. This was also true of those outside of Israel. Amalek had harassed Israel during their time in the wilderness. Because of this the Law commanded their ultimate destruction. King Saul was charged with carrying out this judgment. He was to treat Amalek as a “devoted thing.” He was told, “...**go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy (*charam*) all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey**” (1 Sam. 15:3). Unfortunately Saul did not obey God’s command. Like Achan, he presumed to use God’s things in a way God had not authorized. When he did this and spared the king and the best of the flocks, he was rejected as king of Israel (1 Sam.15:23).

In later Israelite history this principle continued. Even when the northern kingdom of Israel had given itself to idolatry and wickedness, that did not dismiss their responsibility to recognize God’s claim to them and all men. Ahab, the wicked king of Israel made a treaty with Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria. The problem was that God had condemned Ben-Hadad and marked him as a *devoted thing*. God told Ahab that by his treaty “**you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction (*charam*), therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people**” (1 Kings 20:42). In other words, Ahab became

a *devoted thing* by taking a *devoted thing*. In the final stages of Judah’s history, because of her unfaithfulness, she was told that Babylon would come and “**utterly destroy (*charam*)**” her and the nations around her (Jer. 25:9). It would only be after the exile that Jerusalem was promised, “**the people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction (*cherem*), but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited**” (Zech. 14:11). In the exile Jerusalem had become a *devoted thing* “doomed to destruction.” After her punishment she would again be considered a *devoted thing* blessed by God.

Application Under Christ

So what does this all mean for us today? Every person and thing in this universe belongs to God. It is our duty as human beings to acknowledge this and willingly devote ourselves to



God in service and obedience to Jesus Christ. We cannot redeem this obligation by offering anything less than full and complete submission and obedience to His law in Jesus Christ. When men and women reject this obligation like Jericho, Amalek, and Ben-Hadad they cannot dismiss it. Instead they become *devoted things* who are ultimately “doomed to destruction.” Paul quotes God’s promise, “Every

knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11). We are given a choice to serve God willingly, but if we do not recognize that we belong to Him one day that reality will become clear to us when God exacts punishment on His possessions.

Those who have accepted the grace of God in Jesus Christ must never presume authority over things that belong to God. Like Achan, we cannot look at God’s property and use it in ways He has not authorized. We cannot compromise on His word, make treaties with those outside of His covenant and expect His approval. If we are *devoted things* dedicated unto Him we must acknowledge His power over all other things devoted to Him. That’s true whether we are talking about those who faithfully devote themselves to God or those who by rebellion to Him become *devoted things* “doomed to destruction.”



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